The Crucifix After Cellini

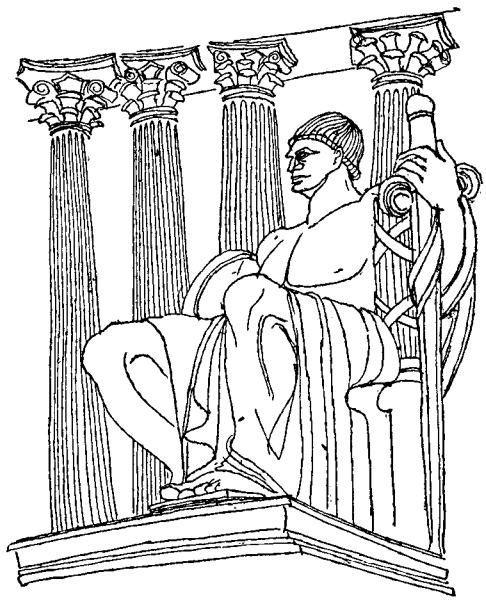
—A Story by Isobel English

THE

Commonweal

The Great American Debate

by Will Herberg



On the Holy Mountain

by John Alden Williams

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CANDLES, particularly tall ones on the gradines of an altar, at times seem perversely resistant to all attempts to light them. When last extinguished, wicks may have been pressed into the molten wax . . . snapped off close to their bases . . . or cocked at awkward angles. In any event, time drags and exasperation mounts as the altar boy or sacristan seeks to effect combustion with the tip of his taper lighter.

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The
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week by week

PATRIOTISM AND RELIGION II

THE St. Louis *Register*, one of the country's most respected diocesan newspapers, recently described our July 1 editorial statement that "religion has nothing essential to do with Americanism" as "secularism, not even thinly disguised." The *Register* also criticized us for saying that it is "dogmatism" to hold that religious belief has an essential relationship with good citizenship.

Last week we wrote on the first part of this question—on religion and "Americanism"—and we denied that religious belief promotes, or tends to promote, any particular patriotism: "Religion," we wrote, "must never be tied to the service of any particular nationalism, and to make religion the servant and guarantor of some particular 'patriotism' is to betray the transcendental vocation of religion." Here we will say something on the second issue—on citizenship and the non-believer. Can the non-believer—the atheist even—be as "good" a citizen as the religious man? We think not only that he can be (even to affirm this in a Catholic magazine sounds condescending), but that sometimes he may prove himself a better one.

We need not seek far for examples of this. In the Dreyfus affair, that moral-political crisis of a "grandeur unparalled in the history of the modern state," it was liberal, secularist opinion that fought passionately for the vindication of justice—against the almost universal opposition of Catholic opinion in France. In Hitler's Germany there were atheists and agnostics who died horribly in concentration camps for opposing the monstrous iniquity of Nazism—while numerous Christians comfortably rationalized their cooperation with the Hitler regime. And in our own country, within the past twenty years, what groups generally fought, and what groups widely supported, those twin manifestations of nativist unreason, Coughlinism and McCarthyism?

Numerous counter-examples can be cited too, examples of the bigoted folly of non-believers and the towering heroism of religious men, but they are not to the point here. The point we would make is that no religious lines can be drawn on this question: one cannot separate the "good" from the "bad" citizen by any test of abstract philosophy or by any rule of revealed truth. To do so, we insist, is "dogmatism" in the worst sense of the word, because it contradicts verifiable facts in experience. Looking at history, we Catholics have too much reason for shame—and too many reasons for gratitude to non-religious men—to permit us any complacency or easy self-congratulations as we consider the question of civic virtue. A more proper attitude for us would be humility as we wonder at the mystery of how men supported by religious principles could so often have been so wrong, and men with no religious principles so right, in their approach to many of the problems of this world.

THESE are a few of the reasons why we feel some consternation as we read with increasing frequency of speakers who imply that religious men have some monopoly on civic virtue—on "good Americanism"—and that their non-believing neighbors are somehow subversive.

The real problem—the mystery even, and the scandal—we must face is this. When the Christian remembers history he should be sickened by the compromises with injustice, the complacency in the face of inequity, the intolerance, the self-righteousness, the rationalized folly which he can see manifested in the "Christian" world. And his humility should be deepened as he recalls, in the past and in the present, those non-religious men who have fought and died for the survival of minimal justice, minimal human decency in the world, men who had no true ultimate philosophy of life, no ultimate hope, but who often suffered persecution for natural justice—at the hands of those who knew the True God.

What will we say today of those Christians who hold tight to their excessive riches while the poor

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weep for bread, and of those individual atheists (and there are such ones) who give their lives to win bread for them. Shall we talk in abstract principles, proving through a syllogism that religion makes men "good" citizens and non-religion men who murder their brothers. And if we do this, what shall we say of those multitudes throughout history who have heroically served justice even when they did not know—and perhaps even thought they had rejected—the name of Christ?

It is not comforting for Christians to face these facts, but they must be faced, even if some find them shocking, because it is less dangerous to shock than to support the dangerous illusion that religion—even the one true religion—guarantees that its adherents will be possessed of some superior virtue and wisdom as citizens of an earthly city. Undoubtedly, given the perennial wisdom of the Church, the Catholic *should* be a great, a heroic, citizen of the earthly city. But this is an ideal, and one cannot speak as though it automatically were realized.

Long ago the Church condemned the heresy that outside the Church no grace is possible—*extra ecclesiam nulla gratia*. Let us not, in the ardor of our Catholic patriotism, propagate a corresponding political heresy—that apart from the guarantees of religious principle no civic virtue, no reasonable patriotism, is possible. Let us not deceive ourselves: we who know the Church are still capable of terrible injustices, terrible blindnesses, in our life as citizens, and there are great lessons we can learn from those non-religious men throughout the ages who, on the natural level, have been better than we often are—more charitable, more zealous for natural justice, more devoted to truth, more disinterested in serving their neighbor, less sectarian in seeking the common good.

Throughout time, we Christians must mourn our many failures and admit that those who have opposed us on some issues of this world were sometimes right. And always we must avoid the implications of religious nationalism—of seeking to bind the Church to particular patriotisms, thus confusing our own fallible, temporal allegiances with the Church's eternal mission. We must be suspicious of a religiously sectarian "Americanism"—of speaking as though religious men, and only they, can serve the natural good of earthly societies. We repeat here what we said in our July 1 editorial: good citizenship carries no religious test, nor does sanctity wear a badge of nationalism.

NEXT WEEK

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN tells of a visit, this summer, to Stalinogrod, Poland, and to the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

"This area in southwestern Poland is one of the biggest industrial areas within the Eastern bloc, with mines next to mines and a *kombinat* of factories combining with similar groupings of factories for hundreds of square miles. It is the pride of the Polish Communist regime. In Europe it can be compared only with the Ruhr area or "the black country" in England. . . . During a religious holiday I went to another part of the area, Piekary Slaskie, where in the middle of a forest of factory chimneys, a shrine arises on a hill, called the Calvary. I wanted to see how the struggle between the Church and the Communist rulers had developed among the proletarians in this most typically industrial area, since the day Cardinal Wyszynski was arrested a couple of years ago because of events which had taken place on this very spot."

LABOR SURPLUS AREAS

WITH the gainfully employed at the sixty-five million mark for the first time in history and the national product pushing toward new peaks, there are—aside from various low-income groups—two main sectors for concern in the national economic picture. One of these is the continuing decline in American farm income, the second the chronic industrial distress areas in various states and Puerto Rico, where unemployment continues at high rates. Unless the tide turns in both these sensitive areas the nation as a whole appears to be headed for trouble.

The press has made much of certain community efforts to offset the shutting down of local plants which had long served as a mainstay of a city's economy. No doubt without such strenuous boot-strap efforts things would now be considerably worse, but actual employment figures show that invariably the local problem remains; the new industries that have been induced to come have not supplied enough in the way of production and payrolls to take the place of the plants that have been abandoned—to take one typical cause of chronic local unemployment. As the special summer issue of the CIO's *Economic Outlook* summarizes it, "few of the community-development projects have come close to achieving their employment goals."

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The pattern has a number of variations. There are instances where, at least regionally, a major industry is in decline, as is the case with the textile industry in several New England states. Or it may be that mines have given out or that more efficient fuels or new production methods have put communities in Eastern Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and various localities in the Middle West, on the economic skids. Or it is simply that one of the larger corporations has decided in the interests of efficiency to build, or move into a different plant, somewhere else.

In view of the number of livelihoods involved in such a process (as is the case with the victims of recent floods), there are state and federal responsibilities engaged when local effort proves to be of no appreciable avail. Moreover, not only is the current danger to the national economy embodied in such chronic distress areas to be considered, but also the importance of working out feasible techniques, now, to prepare for the even greater displacements that will inevitably be attendant on the widespread introduction of automation and atomic power.

This is not solely a task for government. Private enterprise—particularly the larger companies—can do much to make the transfer of production facilities less calamitous. They must begin by recognizing the extent of their local responsibilities, thoroughly weighing the possibilities of remaining in their present communities or nearby. When this proves impossible, these companies should give adequate notice and make the transformation as gradual as possible, making special provision for older workers who will have difficulty getting new jobs. In addition, these companies, when planning to establish new plants elsewhere, should give priority in their plans to our labor surplus areas.

There is much the federal government can do beyond its present program of placing of defense plants and awarding of contracts and its distribution of food surpluses. Few things are more sorely needed than an agency directed to this specific national problem on a coordinated and over-all basis. We can afford to neglect our Scrantons, our Terra Hautes, our Lawrences and our Johnstowns no longer.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

IN Toledo, Ohio, police have recently been instructed to observe more correctly the civil rights of those being arrested: warrants must be served, arrests "on suspicion" must be curbed, and —among other items—anyone being arrested may be represented by a lawyer of his choice. This is good. But it is not good enough.

Night-court has been written about often enough; there is great drama and poignancy there—the human comedy. The court-room is usually physically unattractive, and into it file an improbable assemblage of drunks and prostitutes and derelicts and petty thieves.

Each one is made to stand before the judge while an officer in charge reads aloud the charge, at the end of which he does not fail to rattle off the formula which includes something about ". . . you may contact a lawyer of your choice." Then, the judge will say, "Do you wish to consult with your lawyer?" Many times the person being asked this question is penniless, frightened, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or of such a low mental caliber that he is incapable of understanding the question or of corresponding with his questioner. Many times he is beyond hope. Certainly he has no lawyer, and frequently no family. Even when the judge asks him—under certain circumstances—if he wants the court to appoint a lawyer, he doesn't know. So, what usually happens is that he gets sentenced—on the spot: "Thirty days!" "Ninety days!" And a man is taken away to prison for having drunk too much wine, or for not having a place to sleep, or for asking for an alms.

To offer to let a man in this rhythm of existence contact his lawyer is, at best, fatuous; it would make as much sense to offer to have his car brought 'round, or to ask him if he would like to have a conference with his analyst, or his spiritual director. And even if the judge calls down from the bench the formula about the court appointing a lawyer—and this does not always happen—most of the time the person is too hungry or humiliated or tired or sick to know what he wants—except to get it over as quickly as possible.

When the standing man is before the bench—all dirty and wretched—and the types who are attending the court for kicks and laughs are laughing at him, it is no time to ask him if he wants to contact his lawyer. It should be presumed that everyone will need a lawyer—to cope with this complex legal system. If a man does not have a lawyer it must be presumed that he will want one. And a lawyer must be made readily accessible to him. And this should be done in private, before he appears in court. And during this time before he appears to be judged, he should be treated humanely and with respect.

To have the forms of liberty without the economic substance to make them whole, living bodies

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is to indulge in a phariseeism we cannot afford. Implementing our beliefs is our defense-in-depth. Indicating our failures is a little lash that will help to keep our sluggard frame from sagging.

SUDAN REVOLT

THE worldwide trend of colonial peoples to national independence was bound eventually to make itself felt in the Sudan, which since 1899 has been administered jointly by Egypt and Great Britain. In fact, such a development was provided for in a recent agreement between the two powers —to the extent of a withdrawal of their troops when the design for national independence should become officially manifest.

For a time Egypt herself sought to administer the Sudan alone, but this idea encountered the opposition of Sudanese patriots. A somewhat similar pattern is emerging among the Sudanese themselves. On the very eve of the independence provided for by treaty, South Sudan, which is largely tropical forest, rose against its army officers and administrators from North Sudan, a vast desert area punctuated by the Nile and peopled by Moslem Arabs who have attained a considerable degree of civilization.

It would seem that for the time being British and Egyptian troops would have to remain at their Sudanese stations to prevent a North-South struggle that could develop into a civil war. This area has its own peculiar tensions but it demonstrates in no uncertain fashion that the liquidation of colonialism is often fraught with difficulties; it can seldom be compassed in a day. Too often such obstacles have been seized upon by ruling powers to delay indefinitely the freeing of a colony. Even with the best of intentions on both sides the required setting up of a timetable of liberation is a complicated process.

BY THE BEAUTIFUL SEA

RECENTLY in Atlantic City, at a convention of the Improved Protective Order of Elks of the World, which is described in the press as a leading "Negro organization," Mr. Everett Frederic Morrow, a high administrative assistant to President Eisenhower, castigated Negroes for their alleged extravagances. Mr. Morrow complained that Negroes were spending too much money on "whiskey, furs, cosmetics, cars" and other luxuries instead of investing in the fight for civil rights. He alleged that Negroes have an annual income exceeding fifteen billion dollars. He claimed that Negroes are the only unit in American life "having such a colossal spending power," and that they were mis-using it.

Reading these words, one may be disarmed because Mr. Morrow is himself a Negro, and he is being critical of "his own." But Mr. Morrow's words are dangerous nevertheless—partly because their premises are so inadequately founded.

For one thing, the fifteen billion dollar figure is one that must have been very difficult to arrive at; we'd have to see it proved before accepting it. We'd also like to see proved the strange statement that only Negroes—as a block—have such a sum at their disposal. It is like saying that Jews control our finances, or something; immediately one's mind starts listing all the Wall Street houses with the very Anglo-Saxon names. It would also be difficult to prove that Negroes—as a group—fail to shoulder civic responsibilities. How can such loose talk come from an official in a responsible post?

It would also be extremely difficult to prove that Negroes, including the huge numbers toiling in the South, where in many parts a wage differential is a reality, spend more than Caucasians on whiskey and cars and lipstick. (And are these things—strictly speaking, in the framework of our mores and economy—always luxuries?) And one thinks of all the conspicuous consumption among "Whites" in Nice or Las Vegas or New York.

As a nation, we might be criticized legitimately for spending too much on luxuries in a hungry, angry world. There is the possibility that we—as a nation—might have to bear moral responsibility for permitting others to suffer while we dissipate our wealth. Certainly individuals will have to bear responsibility in this regard.

But, the type of ghetto-mentality that attempts to fragment the nation into class-conscious or race-conscious enclosures does all of us a disservice. The great effort should be towards making the liaison between classes and races easier. Why speak of a Negro doctor or a Negro criminal? There is a man who is a doctor who is a Negro who may be either a good or a bad doctor, and he may be a citizen of New York or Cardiff or Rio; the state of his soul is known to God; his technical ability is known to his patients and his colleagues; one may or may not feel *simpatico* towards him as an individual; he may or may not be physically attractive.

It is really a little bit discouraging to feel the necessity of spelling out these things in 1955. They were pretty well talked through in the Thirties. There is nothing very complicated to grasp.

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The Great American Debate

"IT HAS OPENED UP A DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL FUNDAMENTALS MORE FAR-REACHING THAN ANYTHING WE HAVE KNOWN SINCE THE CIVIL WAR"

WILL HERBERG

A GREAT debate is under way in this country today. It is focused on political philosophy, but it finds its repercussions in new and diverse interpretations of American history, American society, and American culture, as well as in differing views on domestic policies and international relations. The debate has opened up a discussion of political fundamentals more significant and far-reaching, perhaps, than anything we have known since the Civil War. It is being conducted under the banners of "conservatism" and "liberalism," and a good part of the argument seems to be devoted to the proper definition of these terms and to the assessment of the part that the tendencies or outlooks they designate have played, are playing, and seem destined to play in American life.

The recent writings of Peter Viereck, Russell Kirk, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. have kept the discussion intellectually exciting and relevant to the larger issues of our culture. Now two other distinguished scholars have joined the debate with works that attempt to interpret conservatism and liberalism in the over-all context of American political thought. Clinton Rossiter's *Conservatism in America* (Knopf. $4.) and Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* (Harcourt, Brace. $4.75), appearing almost simultaneously, yet so different in tenor and purpose, have raised the liberal-conservative debate to a new level of insight and historical understanding.

Mr. Rossiter's book is a lucid, well balanced study of conservatism in America's past, a survey of its present status, and a plea for a "new conservatism" that will play what he feels to be a much needed and constructive role in America's future. Mr. Hartz's volume is of a very different kind. It is a sustained and vigorously presented argument for a special thesis Mr. Hartz holds as to the nature and development of American political thought.

In effect, Mr. Hartz maintains that this country has always been, and remains today, an essentially "Lockean" community, dominated by an "irrational Lockeanism" which has formed the ideology and outlook of virtually all sections of the American people. The American people, as Veblen once pointed out, took "their point of departure from the European situation when the system of Natural Liberty was still 'obvious and simple' "; it therefore "arrived at a state of democracy without having to endure a democratic revolution" (Tocqueville), with no feudalism to destroy and no aristocracy to overthrow. American society has always been liberal; American life has transformed "passive peasants into dynamic farmers, bitter proletarians into incipient entrepreneurs," united in a nation by a common middle-class liberal solidarity. America's "total Lockeanism," we are told, has thwarted the emergence of conservatism or socialism along European lines; whatever conservative or socialist thinking there has been in this country has been weak, confused, and without real relation to American life. The great battles in American politics, with the one exception of the Civil War, have been battles entirely within the liberal community, between well-to-do Whiggery, on the one side, and democrats-on-the-make on the other. Since the 1840's, when America's "upper classes" gave up their pretence to being a European aristocracy, the Whigs have operated with two mechanisms to maintain their hold on American society—"the Horatio Alger mechanism of enchanting the American democrat, and the 'Americanistic' mechanism of terrifying him." The great depression and the New Deal did not essentially change this.

"Actually, what we find during the New Deal era," Mr. Hartz states, "are two [Lockean] irrationalisms fighting with each other: the explicit 'Americanism' of Hoover, on the one hand, and the sublimated 'Americanism' of Roosevelt, on the other." The great peril of this kind of "total Lockeanism" is provincialism and narrowness of perspective, so painfully apparent in these days of America's worldwide responsibilities. Mr. Hartz's last words in this book are a plea for "a new level of [national] consciousness, a transcending of irrational Lockeanism," the "irrational Lockeanism" that has been the very warp and woof of American political life from the beginning of our national existence.

Mr. Herberg writes frequently for The Commonweal, *Commentary*, and other magazines.

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It cannot be denied that Mr. Hartz's thesis is an impressive one and is impressively argued. It enables him to cast light on many of the obscurer episodes in the history of American political thought and to view the whole in a new perspective. But it also seems to me to involve him in a dramatic oversimplification of the total picture, leading to what I cannot help but feel to be distortions and misinterpretations of American reality. The most serious of these is his utter failure to discern, understand, and evaluate America's conservative tradition. Indeed, a writer who thinks of Edmund Burke as simply an ideologist of "feudalism"— this is how Mr. Hartz repeatedly describes him—is hardly the man to do conservatism justice. Mr. Hartz takes a low view of the *Federalist* papers, pictures John Adams as a liberal who did not understand himself, and Calhoun as utterly confused in his premises and conclusions. In the end, his finding is that "we have never had a real conservative tradition."

IT is here that Clinton Rossiter's book is so much more satisfactory. Mr. Rossiter has no special thesis as to the development of American political thought; what he tries to do is to present one aspect of it—the conservative tradition—as clearly and as judiciously as he can, and in this he succeeds admirably. His is perhaps the single most important contribution so far made to the liberal-conservative debate.

Conservatism, as Mr. Rossiter sees it, originally had an honored place in American political thought and was a potent force in American politics. The *Federalist* papers are a landmark of conservative thinking, "conservatism at its best, at its finest and most constructive," and John Adams stands out as the most profound and authentic conservative political philosopher in our history. But even before the nineteenth century American conservatism began to be undermined by the new forces of the modern age, democracy and industrialism.

The Civil War—Mr. Rossiter and Mr. Hartz agree, though with different implications—was the "great divide." After the Civil War, both sides in the political and social struggle, Mr. Hartz's "Whigs" and "democrats," tended to proclaim their purposes and defend their positions in the language of liberalism, since liberalism alone seemed able to come to terms with the democratic-industrial upheaval convulsing the nation. To the "democrats," liberalism was a philosophy of welfare that looked out for the interests of the masses—even though government intervention had to be invoked for that purpose. To the "Whigs," liberalism was a philosophy of freedom, which they interpreted as the economic freedom of *laissez-faire* and of opportunity—which they interpreted as the opportunity of a ruthless capitalism to take over.

Mr. Rossiter, with deep insight, shows how the philosophy of the dominant groups became a "*laissez-faire* conservativism," which had little to do with conservatism in its older and more authentic sense. "Creator and creature of the climate of materialism, [the *laissez-faire* conservative] came to equate life with business, religion with success, and the moral law with the struggle for existence." His ideology, which he called liberalism and traced to Jefferson, was in fact a compound of Manchester economics and social Darwinism. But he was a liberal, and so were his opponents. "The greatest of *laissez-faire* conservatives," Mr. Rossiter points out, "was an English liberal, Herbert Spencer."

So it has continued: Herbert Hoover insists he is a liberal, and so did Franklin Delano Roosevelt; Senator Taft proclaimed his liberalism, as does Adlai Stevenson. And to compound the confusion, many men on the "liberal" Left look more like authentic conservatives than do the champions of the "conservative" Right. "Small wonder," Mr. Rossiter ruefully concludes, "that words like *liberalism* and *conservatism* [have] lost much of their meaning, especially since both sides . . . [keep] arguing in the language of liberalism."

And yet these two terms do stand for something, something significant in American political thought with real relevance to American political life. The two varieties of liberalism—the "business" liberalism of the "Whig" and the "social welfare" liberalism of the "democrat"—do have something basic in common, in which they differ widely from authentic conservatism. Liberalism, in both varieties, is the heir and continuator of the French Enlightenment, while conservatism in its proper sense emerged as a philosophy of life and politics in reaction against the French Revolution and its works. Liberalism is essentially rationalistic and anti-historical; it sees the political task as the remaking—or the preservation—of the social order along "rational" lines. Conservatism is, above everything else, history-minded; it sees history as shaping men and institutions, creating the fundamental context of social life, setting man his tasks and responsibilities, but also defining the limits of his pretensions. "The essence of conservatism," Mr. Rossiter declares, "is the feeling for the possibilities and limits of natural, organic change," while liberalism, in the words of Tom Paine, insists that every age and generation must be free to act for itself in all cases. . ." Liberalism is thus identified with the belief in progress, whereas conservatism, on the other hand, is possessed of a strong sense of the ambiguity of all human achievement and the perennial predicament of man in society.

Because liberalism is rationalism, it is also moralistic. It sees politics in terms of "morality" and "principle"; it is impatient of compromise, and every politi-

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cal controversy becomes for it a moral crusade, with the bright champions of "progress" arrayed against the dark forces of "feudalism" and "reaction." To conservatism, on the other hand, the sense of history brings a sense of continuity amid innovation, a sense of the relativity of all political issues and all political conflicts; to the conservative, politics is, therefore, a matter of expediency rather than of unalterable principle, a matter of adjusting and readjusting interests in a tolerable balance rather than of whipping up a crusade against the powers of darkness. Liberalism is passionately idealistic, just as it is rationalistic and moralistic; it sees politics as a cosmic battle for some great and controlling idea to which reality is to be made to conform. Conservatism, however, deeply distrusts "ideocracy," the ruthless subjection of all social life to a master idea. To be constructive, political action must follow the grain of history, not try to coerce history along the lines of some rational or ideal blueprint. Conservatism holds to the Burkean "standard of a statesman: a disposition to preserve and an ability to improve."

Liberalism is impatient of political restraints; even when it is "Whiggish," it speaks in terms of the "will of the people" as the final law and the highest wisdom.

Conservatism stands for representative government and (more recently) for democracy; but it makes a sharp distinction between the "direct" mass democracy that leads to totalitarianism, and the constitutional democracy, a democracy of "checks and balances," that restrains the popular will in the interests of freedom and order. Liberalism tends to see political society in terms of individual citizens confronting the state, either as enemy or as benefactor; conservatism stands for a more complex system in which individual, state, and "intrinsic group" of association (Burke's "little platoons") are united in an ever shifting balance. Liberalism tends to be secular-minded, and to separate not merely church from state, but also religion from life, particularly from political life. Conservatism places the highest valuation on religion, remembering with Coleridge that "religion is and ever has been the center of gravity in a realm, to which all other things must and will accommodate themselves," and with Washington that "reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." Finally, and in summary, conservatism detests extremes and looks to history for understanding and guidance, whereas liberalism is intrinsically extremist by virtue of its rationalism, moralism, and idealism.

IF we think of liberalism and conservatism in this way, two surprising conclusions emerge: The first is that no nation has been more unanimously liberal in its political faith and ideology, and few nations more consistently conservative in their long-range political practice, than the United States. "The political American," Mr. Rossiter repeats, "is the most conservative of all. . . . Our social reforms, too, bear the stamp of practical conservatism." Liberalism has, in a way, become a conservative tradition. This is reflected in the extraordinary stability of American political institutions through many disturbing decades of economic and social change.

The other significant conclusion is the fact that as contrasted with conservatism, both types of liberalism—the older "business" liberalism and the newer "social welfare" liberalism—are extraordinarily alike. They are both anti-historical, both rationalistic, moralistic, idealistic, and democratic in ideology and outlook. The one really important point of difference—their very different attitudes to government and government intervention—may plausibly be traced to the different groups or classes championing the two liberalisms. The "business" liberalism of the Manchester School emerged as the political philosophy of the advancing industrial bourgeoisie; quite naturally, the rational, moral, ideal social order seemed to it to be one of "free enterprise" and no governmental interference. Senator Taft well expressed this conviction in one of his favorite maxims: "If liberty prevails unimpaired, everyone who deserves security will have security." The newer "welfare" liberalism, on the other hand, is the political philosophy of the "combination of lawyers, business and labor managers, politicians, and intellectuals" (Schlesinger) who came to power in the New Deal; to them it seems quite as natural that the rational, moral, ideal social order should be the "welfare state," implementing—to recall the frank words of former Mayor Joseph S. Clarke of Philadelphia—a "liberal program of the orderly policing of our society by government." The kinship, within

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the terms of difference, is obvious, and justifies the use of "liberal" to cover both philosophies. Even when the conservative approves of social welfare activities and the "welfare state" in certain of its aspects, he does so on grounds and from a point of view that distinguishes him almost as sharply from the newer liberalism as from the older.

The future, Mr. Rossiter thinks, holds out better hope for a genuine conservatism than one might assume from its virtual submergence in the tide of liberalism during the past hundred years. "With radicalism out of fashion, and liberalism out of office," with a conservative mood gripping the country and the conservative philosophy being explored by increasing numbers of intellectuals, it may prove possible, he thinks, to bring forth a "new conservatism," which will adapt conservative fundamentals to the political realities of "a country in which liberalism has been the common faith and middle class democracy the common practice." The last two chapters of his book—"A Conservative Theory for American Democracy" and "A Conservative Program for American Democracy"—constitute Mr. Rossiter's contribution to this "new conservatism," and a contribution of the first order it certainly is.

And yet one is left with certain questions. If conservatism is ever to become once more a real force in American politics, it will have to win the support of substantial sections of the American business community. But is it really possible for the American business class to convert itself into a responsible "aristocracy" in the conservative sense? Is not the temper of dynamic American business too essentially liberal, too essentially radical perhaps, for that? Who is more of a rationalistic innovator in his own field, who is less given to tradition, than the American business man, for whom "revolutionary" is a term of the highest praise in matters of industrial engineering or marketing technique? Who is less history-minded ("History is bunk," said Henry Ford)? Who is more moralistic, more given to moral passions in politics? Who more idealistic, and more self-righteous in his idealism? The hope of a "new conservatism" would seem to be a tenuous one indeed if it must look to the business class for its social grounding and power. This point would appear to be of considerable importance, for if it is at all true, it means that conservatism is not a real political possibility in this country today; the most it can hope for is to become an intellectual and cultural force mitigating the nation's ingrained liberal faith.

Nor is it so certain that even an authentic conservatism would prove adequate to the needs of the nation in the crisis of the mid-twentieth century. In domestic affairs, it may be granted, conservatism, with its detestation of extremes and its sense of measure and moderation, might meet our need; but how appropriate is the conservative philosophy and approach to foreign policy in this "ice age" of total war and total dictatorship? The very temper of conservatism—its moderation, its proneness to compromise and "adjustment"—would seem to incapacitate it for dealing realistically, or even for understanding, the implacable extremism of Nazi and Communist totalitarianism, at least as much as its ideological defects incapacitate liberalism. After all, did not Burke himself, the very fountainhead of conservatism, admit that in the crisis of his time, his "whole politics" centered "in one point, and to this the merit or demerit of every measure [was] referable: that is, what [would] most depress or promote the cause of Jacobinism"? In other words, did not Burke himself have to abandon his conservative moderation when confronted with the fury of the French Revolution? Something beyond both conservatism and liberalism would seem to be required if we are to cope with totalitarianism in the inhuman world that totalitarianism has created.

VERY much the same conclusion emerges on a deeper and more fundamental level. Even those who are favorably inclined to conservatism as a political philosophy must be disturbed by the role that conservatism assigns to religion. In the conservative vision, religion is esteemed as a great conservative institution, as a spiritual force making for stability and order, as the moral foundation of civil society. This, in effect, makes religion into an exalted public utility, an instrument for political ends, political ends of a high order, it is true, but political ends nevertheless. Religion is thus robbed of its transcendence, of its prophetic protest against the existing order—in other words, of that which preserves it from becoming merely an idolatrous cult sustaining society.

Authentic religion, certainly authentic Jewish-Christian religion, can never accept the role which conservatism, in its eagerness to conserve what is indeed worth conserving, assigns to it. Religion sanctions society, but cannot be its handmaiden; it sustains the social order, to the degree that it is worth sustaining, but at the same time subjects it to a radical, and what must sometimes seem shattering criticism. Its standpoint can never be simply that of society itself. That is why the man of faith, whether he thinks of himself as a conservative or a liberal, will strive to achieve a perspective that transcends both liberalism and conservatism, however useful he may find either philosophy for its appropriate purpose. He will certainly suspect the adequacy of any political philosophy that tries either to expel religion from the common life, or make of it a mere instrument of the social order.

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FROM MOUNT ATHOS

On the Holy Mountain

FOR more than a thousand years, Athos, the Holy Mountain, has owed much of its peculiar character to its isolation, and even in an era of rapid communication, it is able to preserve something of its aloofness. After the traveler has presented a letter of recommendation from his consulate to the Greek foreign ministry, and secured another letter commending him to the Sacred Kinotis, the government of the monk-republic, he must travel the better part of a day by country bus from Thessalonica, through the prosperous countryside of Chalkidike and the village of Stagira, where Aristotle was born, to a fishing town from whence the next morning he can get a fishing boat to the Mountain—the easternmost of the three fingers of the Chalkidike peninsula. Disembarking at one of the monasteries, or at the port village of Daphne, one can walk or hire a mule for the two-hour climb up to Karyes, the capital. Here is the seat of the Kinotis, a twenty-man Senate of representatives from the twenty "great cloisters" and the residence of the official who represents Greece, the protecting power. Here also one receives in exchange for the documents the *diamonitirion*, which alone entitles him to the hospitality of the Holy Mountain.

The still undeforested mountains, with their fountains and streams, the magnificent Aegean blues and greens, the marble cliffs of Athos itself, form, with the castellated monasteries, an un-Greek and even romantic landscape. In the clearings are the herds of steers and wethers that provide the little meat eaten here; the only exceptions to the ancient ban on "every female creature" today are cats—since it has been equally impracticable to prohibit female rodents' residence on Athos—and in one or two monasteries, as an innovation, hens. The otherwise strictly observed law is taken from the reform of the Basilian Rule of St. Theodore, the ninth century defender of the holy ikons and of Papal rights in Constantinople. The saintly abbot of Studion forbade the keeping of animals in pairs, lest the sight of their coupling offend the eyes and the consciences of his monks. And it is many centuries since any woman has set foot here, in "The country where no one is ever born."

This curious designation, still employed with striking pride by the monks, is one of the several insistent reminders that here one is dealing with a type of spirituality and of monasticism which is much closer to the Desert Fathers than anything which has survived in the West. This is a land where it is a matter of lively debate as to whether "deviation from the Julian calendar may not endanger one's salvation," where the carrier of a tiny statue of Our Lady is likely to be told—as was one of my companions, a Rhineland Byzantinist—that "the representation of Holy Persons in the round is heretical," and where the devil is looked upon as so real a personal enemy that his frescoed representations are scratched and spat upon, just as the ikons are devoutly kissed, for as at least some monks will assure you, "the clawing of the devil's picture gives him great anguish."

It is a land where marvels and legends are the small talk of the day, and where every cloister is a Byzantine fortress, built to keep out not only sea-robbers but all the raids of "the world"—here not an abstract term, but a place which lies on the other side of the borders.

Although every guest is welcomed with great courtesy and hospitality, and his origins learned with friendly and insistent curiosity, the monks evince little curiosity as to the happenings in "the world." One excellent old monk told me how, after a stay at his cloister, a visitor had sent him a year's subscription to a famous newspaper. "Now, what was I supposed to do with that?" he asked in evident mystification. An exception was an old monk who promised to remember me in his prayers if I would send him "some pictures of New York, and the buildings."

And there are few countries where money is more useless than the Holy Mountain. It can be used for transportation by mule or fishing boat, but outside Karyes and Daphne, the two "secular" villages inhabited by workmen, police, customs officials and charcoal burners, only the *diamonitirion* gives one the right to the necessities of life.

IF it was the intellectual task of the West to bind together the supernatural and the natural in a rational system of thought, it was the concern of the East to set in stable formulae the definitions of orthodoxy, and then to follow them with single-minded "spiritual-athleticism." Thus the monks, the spiritual athletes, have been the guardians of "orthodoxy," coming out of their retreats to guide the religious policy of the Empire and the Eastern church—as for instance in the late period of Byzantium, when Emperor and Patriarch were seeking to heal the schism with Rome, the determined opposition of the Holy Mountain and the moral influence of the monks on the laity forbade any union with the Latin "non-yeasters."

More than the distrusted secular clergy, more even than the Patriarch of Constantinople, who as chief

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priest of the Imperial Cult became merely an important member of the Byzantine bureaucracy, the monks have been the center of gravity of the Eastern church. Fallmerayer, the nineteenth-century German scholar who traveled here, referred to Mt. Athos, not without reason, as "das Anti-Vatikan."

Germany's foremost Byzantinist, Franz Dölger, states: "The Eastern Church knows no scholasticism in the proper sense; she is the church of *Mystery*"; and only once, on Athos, has this statement been even temporarily challenged. In 1743, influenced partly by echoes of the Enlightenment, a seminary arose under the patronage of Constantinople where some of the greatest Greek scholars of the time sought to revive the remnants of the Byzantine humanistic tradition. But the monks, perhaps frightened by rumors of the intellectual revolution taking place in Europe, knew no rest until they had made its continued existence impossible. When it was closed, they celebrated their triumph by looting and destroying the buildings.

Every monastery has, of course, its library. The libraries are filled with a priceless splendor of illuminated Greek codexes, the majority of which have not been copied or microfilmed. But very few of the monks can read the archaic language, and usually one finds the libraries ill-cared for and poorly ordered. Within living memory several books have either disappeared completely or disintegrated. The monks not unnaturally fear theft, and we soon found out that often the best way to view them—as well as the many magnificent reliquaries and the oldest ikons—is not to express too much curiosity concerning them. But it is pleasant to note that there are two or three librarians who have carefully rebound, catalogued and housed the books in their care, and show them with great interest and pride.

What inevitably strikes the visitor is the scarcity of monks under middle or old age. There are only about 2,500 monks on the mountain today, and the average "great cloister" has around forty monks. Although the huge monasteries have housed many times more, whole wings today are abandoned. When we spoke of this to one of the older monks, he replied, smiling complacently, "yes, it is *dissolving* now."

Unlike the Benedictines of the West, work is not a necessary part of the day's routine. Most of the work of food-producing and maintenance is done by hired laborers who come to spend a year or so on the mountain in return for food, lodging, and a daily wage of about sixty-five cents. Some monks work to support themselves; others, hermits, rent a hermitage and a field from one of the monasteries and raise their own food.

By losing our way, a companion and I stumbled onto one of these—who left us with one of our strongest impressions of the mountain. A little, whitebearded man whose robe hung in greasy tatters, he met us with easy courtesy and showed us his hermitage: a tiny chapel with a few ikons, a kitchen-storeroom, and a sleeping cell with a bed of planks on two trestles. He served us a glass of brandy of his own making, and guided us at least two miles by a shortcut to the monastery we were seeking. His whole bearing was warm, intelligent and independent, well disposed to and interested in his fellowmen—but without any need for their company. He sees them once a week, he said, when he goes to Sunday Mass at the monastery, and fetches home his weekly ration of bread, oil and wine. Other than this ration, he eats "what the earth gives me."

For those monks who live in cloister, a large part of the day—properly about eight hours—is spent in recitation of the office and liturgical prayers. This begins at two or three o'clock in the morning, announced by wooden clappers, and culminates at six o'clock with Mass. In the afternoon there is more recitation and vespers. In some monasteries, however, the prayers are shortened, and the beautiful Byzantine liturgy hurried through at great rate. The responses are sung by one or two cantors, while the other monks chat in a corner, wander in and out of the church, or sleep in their stalls. I remarked to an orthodox seminarian who was spending the summer in one of the monasteries that I had found participation in village congregations more devout. He shrugged his shoulders. "What do you expect?" he asked. "The monks do this every day. They are tired."

The rest of the day is more or less at the monk's disposal. He may work, meditate, or sleep in his cell. A good deal of time is spent in leisurely conversation under the trees in the courtyard.

Although Mass is offered daily, daily communion is not practiced. In some cases, the monk communicates only the four times a year prescribed, on great feasts. The three-days pre-communion fast from all animal food and oil, and seven days fast from flesh prescribed for laity is a factor here, for only enough monks are ordained in major orders to fill the liturgical needs of the cloister.

The monasteries are divided into two classes: the *idiorrhythmic*, where each monk cares for himself, and only prayers are said in community, and the *cenobitic* cloisters of the common life. In the nine idiorrhythmic cloisters, each monk receives a weekly ration of bread, oil, wine and sardines. The rest of his food, and its preparation, he must provide for himself. Hence, most of the monks work for the cloister as paid cantors, night-watchmen, servants for a richer monk, or—if educated—as clerks handling the correspondence and accounts of the monastery. Some of the older monks carve or paint ikons which are eagerly bought in the orthodox world, but these crafts

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have declined greatly in the last few decades. Some of the monks are so poor as to have great difficulty in providing for even their limited necessities.

There are also the richer monks—with an income from "the world." They can rent from the cloister one of the tiny houses built into the walls, furnish it as they please, and hire one or two of the other monks to work for them. A well set table can be found here, and the owner can have such amenities as rugs, upholstered furniture, and habits of black silk.

The monks elect a provisional abbot yearly, who has little real power. The eleven cenobitic cloisters owe their origin to St. Athanasios of Trebizond—the friend and counsellor of the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas—who in the tenth century first gathered together some of the hermits of Athos and gave them a rule, based on that of St. Theodore of Studion.

Rather ironically, the cloister which he founded and where he is buried, the Great Lavra, is today idiorrhythmic, but at one time every monastery was cenobitic. The cenobites own everything in common, tasks are divided, and the usual monks'-fare of blackbread, vegetables dressed with oil, wine, and occasional fish, is taken twice daily in the refectory, while a lector reads. No meat is served here. The abbot is elected for life, and has supreme authority in all but economic matters. These are the poorest cloisters, but where there is a strong abbot one finds the services carefully and reverently performed, Communion frequent, the state of maintenance high, the welcome of strangers especially warm, and the monks generally well-kempt and contented.

IN the Western Church, since the early Middle Ages at least, the idea has developed that the act of becoming a monk is for the purpose of serving God, but also of serving humanity, either by work or by prayer. The monk becomes a monk not because he hates the world, but because he loves it, and he prays for it by bringing as sacrifice his own worldliness and his self-will. In the East, however, it is the hermit who is the monk par excellence—and the idiorrhythmic cloisters, which may strike one as laden with abuses, began in the fourteenth century as an effort to return to a hermit-like existence, a private meditation free of the authority of rule or abbot. The ideal Athos monk seeks, in the words of the liturgy, "a blameless life, and a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ." By fleeing the world, by cutting every possible tie with it, by wrestling with his personal adversary, the devil, he seeks to become "like the angels," a citizen not of this world, but of the next.

JOHN ALDEN WILLIAMS.

THE SCREEN

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE?

SINCE I haven't read Han Suyin's semi-autobiographical novel, *A Many-Splendored Thing,* I don't know what kind of a defense she puts up for the adulterous love affair between the heroine, a Eurasian woman doctor, and the hero, a newspaper correspondent in Hong Kong. The movie (which adds "Love Is" in front of the book's title) looks on this romance as something pretty yummy and drools endlessly and loquaciously (aided by the film's oft-repeated theme song) on a this-is-bigger-than-both-of-us note. In the movie, the couple are not overly concerned with problems that must have given them cause for pause in real life—problems connected with her mixed blood lines (of which she is very proud), her work (at which she is very skillful and kept busy), the growth of Communism, his work as a correspondent (which keeps him very busy and finally sends him to Korea where he is killed, so the film won't have to solve any of its impasses and can end with a love-is-forever theme), and the fact that his wife refuses to give him a divorce.

Jennifer Jones, looking gorgeous in Oriental costumes, and William Holden, looking thinner now that he's had his chest shaven, play the lead roles handsomely but without much depth. That they never emerge as particularly real people is due to John Patrick's talkative and rambling script and Henry King's direction, which too often avoids the real issues. The shots of Hong Kong and the surrounding country in CinemaScope and De Luxe Color are real, however, and are more impressive than the themes.

THE main difference between the movie version (written by John Collier) and the stage version (written by John Van Druten from Christopher Isherwood's stories) of "I Am a Camera" is one of attitude and point of view. The stage play took its title seriously and viewed the decadent goings-on in Berlin in 1931 (events that varied from the amusing to the sordid) with a detached air that even prevailed in the obvious parallels between all this loose morality and the rise of Nazism. But the movie seems to consider all this pretty cute, and Director Henry Cornelius tries to make Sally Bowles and her lascivious playmates as funny as those automobile-loving characters he directed in "Genevieve." The main body of the story is now told by Chris (played by Laurence Harvey) in a long flashback that has a series of she-may-have-been-naughty-but-she-was-lots-of-fun episodes.

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Julie Harris gives a brilliant performance as the completely amoral Sally, but the rest of the cast (Shelley Winters, Ron Randall, Anton Diffring) hardly keep up with her at all; and the film itself in photography and soundtrack is so poorly done that it seems like something left over from 1931. Some of the incidents (like the one in which hypochondriac Chris is treated by a variety of doctors and therapies at a large party thrown for his benefit) are quite amusing, but many of the scenes (especially those connected with Sally's intended abortion) are both vulgar and embarrassing. There is a limit to what can be done with depravity in the movies, and "Camera" exceeds that limit.

ALTHOUGH "Female on the Beach" tries awfully hard to be a suspenseful "Sorry, Wrong Number" with sex thrown in, it winds up mainly as a mistake for a lot of good actors. Using her entire bag of tricks, Joan Crawford plays a cynical wealthy widow who becomes an easy prey for wealthy-widow-hunting Jeff Chandler who knows how to turn on sex appeal —especially when prodded by his partners-in-crime, Cecil Kellaway and Natalie Schafer. Hovering around this unhealthy set-up are Jan Sterling, who has a yen for Jeff, and Charles Drake, a detective who wants to know if Judith Evelyn, the former occupant of Joan's house on the beach, fell to her death or was the victim of foul play. Watching these thoroughly unpleasant people push their way through the ludicrous plot makes you wonder if you too haven't been the victim of foul play.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE RIGHTS OF NON-CONFORMITY"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In reading the letters which have been published in The Commonweal about your editorial on the arrest of twenty-nine pacifists in New York during the mock air-raid drill, one almost comes to the conclusion that your critics did not bother to read "The Rights of Non-Conformity" [July 15]. In your editorial, two main points were made, one concerning the question of conscience, the other involving civil liberties. I would like to comment upon them in the light of the controversy which they have provoked.

First as to the civil liberties issue. Mr. Eugene F. Schade thinks that the possibility of a "practical" threat to freedom in this case is "remote." Mr. William H. Wells tells us that "some curb was placed on the right of assembly," but of no more consequence than those ordinances which make it unlawful to assemble on busy highways or in a stranger's front parlor. And Mr. J. W. Gaffney, S.J., does not even concern himself with the civil liberties aspect of the case covered in your editorial. For him, the incident is one of civil disobedience, pure and simple, and should be resolved by invoking the doctrine of legitimate authority and the virtue of prudence. In short, none of your critics squarely faced the civil liberties question.

I agree with Mr. Gaffney that the right to assemble, to speak, etc., is *not* a right "unqualified by contingencies of crisis and circumstances." But I—and, I think, The Commonweal—would insist that it is a right which can be suspended only under certain circumstances and in a certain manner. Until the decision in the Smith Act conviction of the Communist leaders, the traditional American test of circumstance and manner was the criterion of a clear and present danger, i.e. the suspension of civil liberties was permissible *only* in a proven case of real danger.

In the case of the New York Civil Defense Emergency Act of 1951, we have a law which: (1) permits the absolute suspension of all civil liberties *in the absence of a clear and present danger*; (2) grants the power to do so *to the executive arm of a state government*; (3) sets up no criteria to inhibit the action of the executive. In other words, this law amounts to a complete and total denial of traditional American theories of exactly how the rights to assemble, to speak, etc. may be qualified.

Both Mr. Wells and Mr. Schade find all of this something of a tempest in a teapot. After all, it is most unlikely that the power given under the New York Civil Defense Act will actually be *used* for insidious purposes, e.g. the declaration of a mock emergency and invocation of the police power to break a strike. Of course it is unlikely. But at all times, and especially in the context of recent years, we must demand the universality of law; we must be wary of improbable but possible tyrannies. The conspiracy doctrine which is playing so much havoc with freedom today was defined in anti-trust cases, and no one cared to mention it at the time; the invasion of privacy in congressional committees was developed in the case of Frank Costello, and who wanted to go to bat for a man we all "knew" was a criminal?

There *is* a civil liberties issue in this case, and, as The Commonweal says, it is a major one. Think what you will about the propriety, wisdom, or prudence of the pacifist demonstration, one must take a stand against any law which allows for the arbitrary and unqualified suspension of the Bill of Rights.

Secondly, as to the issue of conscience. It is the ambiguity of the radical, or the saint, that his activity

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is often opposed to constituted authority, that it seems—to use Mr. Gaffney's phrase—"ill-considered." But whatever the formalities of the situation, I think that The Commonweal's editorial was quite right in pointing out that it is exactly this kind of conscientious conduct which, in the long run, is necessary to progress, moral, religious or civil. Mr. Gaffney implies that you were wrong to draw an analogy between this case and the cases of Thoreau or Joan of Arc. But Thoreau *did* refuse to pay the taxes which legitimate authority demanded of him; and St. Joan *did* defy Pierre Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais. I quite agree with the editorial's statement that their acceptability in respectable circles is primarily based upon the fact that they are dead. I find it refreshing that The Commonweal will come to the defense of radicals while they are still alive.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON.

East Hampton, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Permit me to comment on the letter of Mr. J. W. Gaffney, S.J. which appeared in your August 19 issue. This letter took The Commonweal to task for its editorial on the arrest of the twenty-nine pacifists who refused to take shelter in the recent national air raid drill.

In the first place, Mr. Gaffney's facts are not quite accurate. He ignores the fact that the demonstrators were pacifists and essentially their protest was against nuclear warfare. Dorothy Day's statement at the time of her arrest is as follows:

> We make this demonstration, not only to voice our opposition to war, not only to refuse to participate in psychological warfare, which this air raid drill is, but also as an act of public penance for having been the first people in the world to drop the atom bomb, to make the hydrogen bomb. We are engaging only ourselves in this action, not the Church. We are acting as individual Catholics. Jacques Maritain, the French philosopher, has written, "We are turning towards men, to speak and act among them, on the temporal plane, because, by our faith, by our baptism, by our confirmation, tiny as we are, we have the vocation of infusing into the world, wheresoever we are, the sap and savor of Christianity."

As for the practical value of the air raid drill, the demonstrators were far from alone in their feeling of its uselessness. The New York *Times* ran a series of articles just prior to the drill the burden of which was that evacuation was the proper method of saving life in the event of an H-bomb raid on New York, and that the type of drill held was antiquated and useless. The city of Peoria, Illinois chose to ignore the whole thing. Governor Harriman, the governor of the state under whose law these people are being prosecuted, was quoted in the press as having made a sarcastic remark about the drill. Mr. Gaffney's charge that these people chose to postpone any manifestation of their distaste for the principles in question during four years is utterly without foundation. Unfortunately, as The Commonweal pointed out, the secular and Catholic press chose virtually to ignore these arrests, and so in the past they have pretty effectively curtailed any possibility of these people getting a nationwide hearing. Undoubtedly one of the motives behind the demonstration was to get such a hearing. To some extent it was successful because apparently the life work of A. J. Muste, Dorothy Day, and Ammon Hennacy had never before come to the attention of Mr. Gaffney.

The last part of Mr. Gaffney's letter seems to come awfully close to endorsing a form of "blind conformism". . . . Unfortunately, his theory of uncritical obedience to the will of the State is widespread and has been to some degree responsible for the most tragic chapters in modern history. The overwhelming majority of Catholics in Germany felt they should not make themselves obstacles to measures which the highest and most expert authorities endorsed for the salvation of the Third Reich. We also have the spectacle of Fascist Italy. And then Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, all countries largely Catholic, were taken over by the Communists without any effective protest being made by the people.

Your readers may be interested to know that one of the twenty-nine demonstrators was Bayard Rustin, a Negro, who several years ago toured the south refusing to ride in the segregated sections of buses. He got quite a distance through charm and a friendly answer to those who objected to his unsegregated presence. But finally they caught up with him in the Carolinas and he wound up doing time on a chain gang.

Here was a man audacious enough to set himself against the sovereign State of North Carolina, and against the enormous plurality of opinion of the citizenry of North Carolina in a radical demonstration against the concept that one race is superior to another. Mr. Gaffney could prove very logically that this was a waste of time, senseless, and unseemly, and yet I feel certain that when Bayard Rustin stands before the Throne of the Son of Justice the time he did on the chain gang will stand him in good stead.

DUANE WHELAN.

Woodhaven, N. Y.

TO the Editors: For several weeks now, you have published a number of letters highly critical of your editorial "The Rights of Non-Conformity" [July 15]. I should like to congratulate The Commonweal

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for this as one of its finest editorials in recent memory, and also to seriously question the relevance of the main objections which have been raised against it. I refer particularly to the most comprehensive of the criticisms, that by Mr. G. W. Gaffney, S.J.; and I believe that the best way to treat of his comments is to give them a point by point consideration.

Firstly, Mr. Gaffney deems "ill-considered" the judgment of the demonstrators regarding the significance of the drill itself. He tells us that "private persons" (whose designation as "practicing social workers" must be termed, at best, inaccurate) may hardly set themselves above the Engineers, the AEC, and "more than ninety-nine per cent of the ordinary people" in matters of "thermonuclear weapons and military and civil engineering." One is shocked here at the intimation that the pacifist protesters were concerned with scientific matters as such. Scientific authorities throughout the world have given us most un-secret warnings of the virtual impossibility of hydrogen-war defense, and the point made by the pacifist pickets on June 15 was that whatever small good might be gained from such a drill by way of preparation is vitiated by the psychological impact of such drills upon the populace in the direction of accepting the idea of war.

Mr. Gaffney actually ignores the *moral* nature of the protest when he talks of "remote possibility," "proximate certainty," and others of those standbys of ethical jargon which serve so well in the cause of transforming morality into geometry. He examines the *inference* of the demonstrators' position in terms of the relative merits of seeking an unlikely escape, and eschewing the attempt; neglecting the fact that this dichotomy has meaning only in the absence of further pertinent factors. And Mr. Gaffney also ignores the possible *motivations* of the protesters, motivations such as bearing witness to a higher good, or to a more important good of the same practical order. In any case, the truth of the matter is that the demonstrators were manifesting concern with what they sincerely considered to be an urgent truth neglected by the authorities—this being that the only substantial defense against nuclear warfare, spiritually and temporally, is its unqualified rejection.

Mr. Gaffney's remarks on the demonstration itself are quite irrelevant to its actual intention and character. It is unthinkable that the protest should be interpreted as opposition to saving lives, or as some contempt for material safeguards, since the obvious concern of those involved in it was to focus upon the real and central problem of survival, the broad problem of nuclear warfare itself.

The basic issue here, however, is one quite apart from that of the advisability of the pacifist demonstration as a particular action. The question is one of

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attitude; attitude toward what these radicals were trying to do, and toward the way they were treated by society for their action. It was the pacifists who came forth as their consciences directed, knowing well the unpleasantness which might await them for it, and it was Judge Louis Kaplan who shouted and insulted in a sickening frenzy of vindictiveness. Yet Mr. Gaffney maintains that what the judge did was *right*, and what the pacifists did was "humanly speaking, inconsequential."

This scheme of values is not unknown to us; it is the stock in trade of all those who would deify "duly constituted authority." The irksomeness is in the fact that those who do this often insist upon the bizarre notion that it has something to do with "Christian principles." But in accord with Christian principles, what have "expert authority" and "enormous plurality" to say about what is *true?* Where would Christianity and civilization be if civil mandates had not throughout history been disobeyed by those acting passionately in the cause of a higher good? And it is the term *radicalism* which properly designates the action of those who throughout history have had an active concern with the most ultimate truths in the social order.

I shall avoid extensive comment upon Mr. Gaffney's conclusions, save to wonder if The Commonweal has indeed put forth its positions these many years *despite* their radicalism, and if the Catholic Worker and the other pacifist groups have yet repented their contributions to "hell on earth." What I should like to consider briefly in closing is the suggestion that the Catholics involved in the pacifist protest ignored the "mind of the Church." The implications of this charge point obviously to an anachronistic and long discredited type of "clericalism" which has always resented religiously inspired action not covered in the manuals. The fact is that many of the manuals are in need of a "radical" revision; because those Catholics who understand the problems of the social order in all their urgency find themselves turning from the manuals to the Church's magisterium in ever more broad and universal terms.

EDMUND J. EGAN.

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A SHORT STORY

The Crucifix After Cellini

ISOBEL ENGLISH

IN WHAT DARK COUNTRY DID SHE FIND HERSELF NOW? The gloom inside the church was so heavy as to be felt; it hung in great folds about her as she knelt in front of the altar. The black stiffened bow on the woman's hat at her side confused and distressed her; it suggested a Maltese Cross, a denigration of the truth. A man's voice from the back of the church made light of the responses.

Caroline cast her mind back to let in the light, for it seemed no light could come from without. The priest's movements were respectful but inaccurate. A little of the cold water trickled down her neck as the stain of original sin was conditionally erased.

("When we get married," Sebastian had said, "it will be a day of lightness and rejoicing. We'll have the altar massed with narcissus, and great golden bursts of Palestrina from the organ.") But to think back to those times now was as painfully difficult as the excavation of a buried city that had been laid waste after terrible defeat. . . .

"Sebastian is all I have got." The first time he had taken her to the flat, his mother had bounced these words lightly over the rim of a tea-cup. She had been twenty-one with all the heavy brooding of prolonged adolescence. Later, with a boldness that she would have described as straightforward, she had remarked, "Your mother seems dreadfully possessive." She had not then known of her own cannibalistic streak: the desire to kill, dissect, and devour. The necessary prerogative of the hunting woman was as yet a mystery hidden beneath the surface of restricted decencies that lead from church to grave.

The passion for post-mortem was still young in her. As a stumbling infant that can only measure its strength by the violence of its falls, so she staggered about in a territory where the older and more worldly might fear to tread.

They had gone forward together in partnership (a joint interest in the bookshop); yet, in a sense, it was she who followed doggedly after his frail, willowy figure, basked in the radiance of his self-obsessive projects, dubbed herself lieutenant so that she might further partake in the activities of his mind. "I want to run my own theater, write my own plays and act in them." Sebastian at twenty-three was as indefatigable as only the inexperienced can be. A sinuous Catholicism—an attitude of mind that set him on bartering terms with his God—made up for what his sensibilities and temperament lacked: "I have made terms with those of the next world. I have said, 'If you do this, I will do that; and in all cases there have been answers." Caroline, in her own lack of faith, marveled; "If I could only believe as he does, we might draw close together; there would not be this gulf of uncertainty between us." She could not pray in the sense of invoking any particular spiritual aid, but she made strange movements of the soul.

One day they had sat together in his room until late in the afternoon, locked together in the sad embrace of youth that does not sense the extent of each other's suffering from indifference. Five o'clock had struck on his French ormolu clock, followed by the few tender bars of a Mozart gavotte that synchronized with the striking of each hour. The door had burst open suddenly and they had sprung apart as his mother towered in the empty space. "Five o'clock," she had said, coldly regarding the untidy state of Caroline's hair and the hem of her blouse that hung limply over the outside of her skirt, "I like my son to have his tea at the proper time." All the piled-up resentment against tiny shafts that had hardly broken the surface of the flesh and drawn blood from only the finest capillary veins, united into a great and wounding hurt. "I should like you to know that I have as much interest as you in this man, since I am going to marry him," she had said. Sebastian had moved to the window to escape their blows. His turn would come, but to begin with he could, by presenting them with his back, stave off the more savage attacks from either of them.

"Is this true? This cannot be true?" The anguish in the mother's voice caused him to turn immediately. He hesitated for less than a second, but the hesitation was too long for Caroline. "Tell her, Sebastian," she said, still confident of his support, "tell her that we are going to be married." He had looked at them both, as they waited for him to speak. His mother had her head held high in grim stoicism, while Caroline, her lips now quivering, a thin mist of tears spreading over the inside of her glasses, had supported the sides of her head with both hands. "Well yes," he had said quietly with all the severity that he could muster in his high young voice, "I have told her I would marry her."

Miss English, a British writer, makes her first appearance in The Commonweal with this story.

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Then she had been in his arms, clutching at the stuff of his waistcoat, tearing at his very heart. Their first tears mingled together in a weak shower that brought neither relief nor fertility. "Shame upon you Sebastian." His mother's face was as smooth and pale as well-worked marble, "Remember you are a Catholic, remember your traditions." Then she had gone from the room. They had lain together side by side, taking refuge in each other's physical warmth; feeding like birds on the small promises of the mouth. "Caroline, I love you, yet before the last stroke of five sounded I betrayed you." "We must get married immediately," she had said, the strength flowing back, her purpose now quite clear.

The very next day at lunch he had taken her hand. "I think we ought to wait a little. I like you so much dear Caroline, but I had a long talk with my mother last night. She believes in us, as I knew she would. But she thinks it only fair to you to wait a little longer."

THE months had grown almost into two years. As her hope for their happiness diminished, so her faith grew, and her distress was never so great that she could not bear it. Unknowingly she experienced the seventh fruit of the Holy Ghost that is called longanimity.

Ibiza had been a last hope; a blinding joy that was as completely perfect as the fragments of land that crumble away from the main coastline, reproducing within their limits an exact miniature of the vegetation and fauna, but are visually limited on all sides by the sea. Caroline knew that whichever way she looked there was always this lapping despair, no way out, no hope of a future together.

On the train back to Victoria she had made a last attempt. ("Sometimes one can be mistaken about these things; perhaps I am too obtuse; perhaps he is waiting for me to say something," she had thought). "Well, what do you think?" she had brought herself to say at last, pushing the dull sounding words through dry lips so that they came away whole and detached but completely unfeeling in any sense, a mere repetition of a hope that had been still-born after a painful delivery. Sebastian was silent; his eyes followed the carefully planned harvest that was being carried on beyond the train window. "If she does not speak now," he thought, "I can hope to extricate myself cleanly. I am completely untouched at this moment—except, perhaps, by the frayed edges of remorse worn comfortable as an old garment; but she could lacerate me again; she has that power with words; she could force me back into the rough sea, beat me about the head and shoulders so that perhaps I might sink."

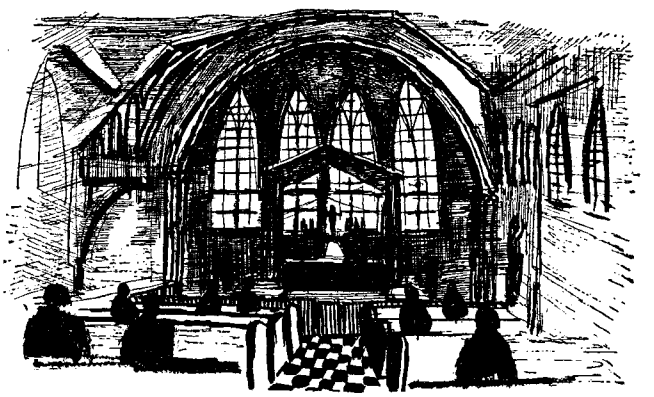
He heard the question now that she repeated it for the second time, and turning his face towards her he refused to interpret the meaning of her words: "What do I think?" He threw the question back lightly now, returning it to her, hoping that she might let it trail away into the greenery and come to rest. "I mean," she pursued doggedly, "What do you think about us? Shall we be able to get married?"

The effort to remember his reply was now as if she tried to tear the bandage off a wound that had become stuck to the lint; when the raised crust of scab outlined through the material shows nothing except that a superficial process of healing has taken place.

For a whole month she neither saw nor telephoned him; a felted stillness seemed to enclose her in a world where like a recently etherized patient she was no longer exposed to the winds of direct feeling, but only to a tired recollection of pain. At the end of this time, with the slow revival of her senses, she sought to free herself from this self-imposed isolation, to focus her attention on something that would draw her out into the harsh light once more; she sat down and wrote a letter to Sebastian's mother: "I would like you to arrange for me to be received into the Church."

TO take tea once more from the blue dragon cups, and hear the muffled sound of Sebastian's typewriter from the next room was not as unpleasing as she might have supposed it would be; it set her heart going at a rapid pace. Once he came to the door of his mother's room and smiled in on her. "I am so pleased at your news, Caroline dear, and you must come to dinner with me one day soon." And then he had swooped down on his hat and silver topped stick that lay on a chair, and with a vague but starry-eyed, "I don't know when I shall be back, Mama," been gone from their sight.

"I am so pleased about him," his mother had said after the door had firmly closed; "he's found new friends, a charming young couple. Of course I'm not supposed to know anything, but I do think that the wife, Claudine is her name, is just a little bit in love with



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our young man." Caroline absorbed the information about Sebastian and remained unmoved. But her hostess was speaking again in a friendly and confidential tone. "Well, I always say that young men must sow their wild oats, and if a mother doesn't understand that, goodness knows who will. I'm thankful that at least the girl's a lady: she runs a little antique shop off Church Street, Kensington; it's called 'Regrets'; perhaps you've seen it—half way up on the left side."

The friendship between the mother and the girl ripened; they were almost in daily communication by letter or telephone; only once was there a sign or flicker of the old resentment there had been against her. An old priest, in fact the one designated by Sebastian to marry them when the time came, had called one day whilst they sat sewing together in the lamplight. He held out his hands in a universal embrace; kindliness and affection radiated from him. "My dear," he said, "so at last you have fixed the date, and you have chosen the most beautiful day, a great feast-day of the Mother of Christ. May you be blessed a thousand fold as you start your life together." Caroline felt herself beginning to float away; almost she could cut the cables that bound her to her mortal frame. In moments of extreme distress or fear it was always thus, as if she sought an outside and greater aid than she would expect to find either within herself or from those directly around her. Sebastian's mother was speaking in a firm but friendly tone: "No, Father, it is something far more wonderful that is to happen on Our Lady's feast day," and then she paused as if to lend power and importance to the words that were to follow: "Caroline is going to be received into the Church on the eighth of December."

Now the mother at her side patted her arm; the little ceremony of reception was over. A nun clothed in a purple and white habit fluttered out from the vestry—a plum coloured bird with a white cross outlined on her breast: "I would like to embrace you my child." Old skin touched her cheek, unfeeling lips sought blindly for contact with the recent grace that had been bestowed upon her.

Then Sebastian was at her side, bent up, his shoulders a little hunched, a small self-consciousness to be standing with her thus before his Sleeping Godhead. Silently he excused himself: "But I have brought you this soul my God; you will not judge me too harshly when I have brought you this soul."

"We shall walk out of the church together," Caroline thought. "My baptism and martyrdom would not be complete without this, yet if it be possible, my God, let this Chalice pass. . . ."

"I have something for you at home, Caroline," he said kindly as they moved forward together, "something I'd like you to keep always. I found this little crucifix in an antique shop; I think the figure is so beautifully carved it might almost be a Cellini."

BOOKS

A Visit to the Eisenhower Brothers

THE GREAT AMERICAN HERITAGE: THE STORY OF THE FIVE EISENHOWER BROTHERS. By Bela Kornitzer. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $5.

By FRANK GETLEIN

THERE will be a time for hagiography. When the decades have passed, when future ballots have been counted, when future *Life* editorial writers can see clearly whether the saint of Abilene, Kansas has once for all turned back the dread tide of socialism. Meanwhile, Bela Kornitzer, who describes himself as a reformed European, here makes his contribution to the Eisenhower canonization proceedings begun in 1948 by Americans for Democratic Action, since turned Devil's Advocate.

Mr. Kornitzer, like many a more finished hagiographer, has taken advantage of the presence of the living saint among us and set out on his job before it's too late. And, like many an opportunity-minded hagiographer, he has cornered the surviving members of the family and gotten them fixed firmly in his notes. For, it must be said, this book can be regarded as little more than notes. Himself blessed with an eye and a heart for opportunity, Mr. Kornitzer taught himself to play the tape recorder and went traipsing about the country in quest of Eisenhowers, wherever they might be found. A good deal of what is published seems to have come directly from the machine. This makes for repetition, of course, and only rarely do you get the same scene from five different points of view. Generally you get the same view five times over.

Besides the repetitive tape, you get a certain amount of pure Kornitzer. It is interesting to speculate on whether so much of what the Eisenhower brothers have to say sounds like pure Kornitzer because it has been filtered through his tape machine or because Mr. Kornitzer himself was shaped in the Eisenhower image while operating the controls. There would seem to be no way to reach a conclusion except by reading Mr. Kornitzer's earlier works and most readers will settle for what's on hand.

Eastern travelers in the great central plain frequently report that if there's one thing they get damned tired of, it's being instructed in the

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simple virtues of the midwest as opposed to the elaborate corruption of the seaboard. While conscientiously refraining from direct attack on any substantial portion of the electorate, the Eisenhower brothers are all great ones for telling over the elevating moral qualities of the land where they were born. Mr. Kornitzer, a Kansan from Budapest, agrees with every word they say five times and is happy to say it a sixth.

This regional tendency to moralize is here raised to a system of philosophy, not without its own inner contradictions, the fruit, one must suppose, of Mr. Kornitzer's vestigial European deviousness. The message is simple enough: pay your bills, work hard, take care of your own, don't accept government handouts, build your own security and if you can't you're shiftless; watch out for opportunity in this land of opportunity, don't drink and don't smoke and don't hang out with the boys who do.

The inner contradictions arise when this stern and frugal virtue is contrasted with the actual facts of life in the various groups this moralizing philosophy is being raised to further. Example: the relationship between present farm prosperity and government handouts. Example: the relationship between entirely legitimate market speculation and "working hard for a living" in the turn of the century Kansan view.

In short, as Mr. Kornitzer is at some pains to point out, the American country-style old-time religion is indeed at odds with many elements of the New Deal, the Fair Deal, Rooseveltism, Trumanism, liberalism, left-wingism, securityism. As he is at even greater pains to ignore, religion can be just as violent against such other gauds of Satan as stock-markets, corporations, 24 sheet billboards and the city of Detroit. When the Americanization of Bela Kornitzer has reached the point of reading history, he will be surprised to learn that Socialism itself had its most striking American successes in farm areas somewhat north of Kansas, where the energy of the old-time religion secularized itself as the quest for an egalitarian City of Love rather than as the pursuit of individual election in terms of money income; where, to defer to the key words of the book, Security edged out Opportunity and seemed as American as apple pie.

As any party-goer who has been victimized by a hidden tape recorder well knows, the machine can be fun; therefore, the book does have its moments:

"Question: [asked of Milton, the government career man turned university president] How do you feel about the Mambo?

"Answer: I don't care much for jazz."

Again, Mr. Kornitzer, in his determined pursuit of the elusive American essence, asks the brothers if they have any heroes, anyone past or present, in any field, "whom you idolize?" After running through some stock names, Edgar, the corporation lawyer, says that the man who develops a big industrial empire is a romantic figure: "There's Bob Woodruff of Coca-Cola. He's done a tremendous job. That company makes several million bottles of Coca-Cola per day. You don't do that by accident. You do that by work and worry and planning and organization."

Mr. Kornitzer himself has a prose style that would do all right on tape: [still on heroes] "It was in this discussion that he [Milton] broke his rule of never publicly discussing the President: he expressed the unbounded admiration for the President cited earlier."

Insights into the President's style of operation are of value: Brother Earl "said that the President had a completely logical mind. If he once got two points established in any proposition, then all other facts and ideas pertaining to that matter had to fall into place, else they were rejected."

Since Mr. Kornitzer says repeatedly that his book is different from all other books about the President in that he is seeking the enduring human moral values to be found in five boys from Abilene, and further that he's against materialism and worldliness, I called on my old training as a literary counter and discovered an exact proportion between space and fame-money-glamor—the trinity of worldly materialism as we used to call it at Fundamentalist meetings. The soldier-statesman gets forty-eight pages and the others are in scale down to Earl, the only brother to achieve neither fame nor money, who gets fifteen. Of Earl, Mr. Kornitzer says, "He seems to be one of the most contented of the Eisenhowers."

In working out the setting in which these enduring values were inculcated Mr. Kornitzer talked to an uncle and an aunt of the boys. " 'I am told,' said old Mr. Musser with reverence in his voice, 'that Edgar is one of the highest paid lawyers in his part of the country.' Aunt Amanda Musser nodded. 'He's a good boy, the best,' she said. 'He's certainly worked for what he's got.' "

Growth and Decay

THE FOUR RIVERS OF PARADISE. By Helen C. White. Macmillan. $3.50.

By R. T. HORCHLER

IN all its popularity, the historical novel is felt by most serious readers to be a somewhat less than respectable genre. And, ordinarily speaking, this judgment is not far wide of the mark. The first thing to be said about Helen C. White's latest historical novel, therefore, is that it is a serious work, intelligent, thoughtful, and intending more than a few hours' diversion for the lending library *habitué*.

One of the themes of *The Four Rivers of Paradise* is the classic one of the young man from the provinces, who enters the great world, becomes a participant in its great events, and learns thereby to know the world and himself. In this case the provincial youth is Hilary of Gaul, and the world he comes to

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terms with is the voluptuously decadent and disintegrating Rome of the fifth century.

The second motif, which in its descending arc seems to overbalance the pattern of Hilary's growth, is that of decay. Miss White reminds us of the ease with which men forgot—and forget—the transience of all things human. She shows us what it meant when Rome fell, delineates the horror and incredulity which shook the world at the collapse of the Roman empire and, perhaps even more, at the humiliation of the eternal city.

Gradually, however, we are given to realize that time's triumph over man and his works is merely a preliminary, albeit crushing, truth of history. We begin to see that the fall of Rome was as much a beginning as an end, as much birth as death. For the dissolution of the empire and the subjugation of its City marked the beginning of the Christian age, and the emergence in medieval Christendom of a new and indestructible city—the City of God.

Miss White's vision is, therefore, ultimately one of faith and hope. Her novel affirms the mournful truths of Ecclesiastes, but it attests much more to the promises of Christ.

The Four Rivers of Paradise treats of great historical events with a rare largeness of view, with historical understanding, and spiritual awareness, and yet, it is a work of only passing interest, limited by the characteristic weakness of historical fiction—the absence of immediacy, and the power to involve the reader. We discern in this novel the sweep of great historical forces; we respond to the color and movement of the historical pageant-play; but we see all this as from a distance, and as spectators merely. Miss White's characters are convincing and significant in their relation to the forces of history much more than in their relations to one another. They have no psychological depths; their lives communicate no passion, no tension. In the whole scheme of the novel there is none of the intensity necessary for us to be humanly touched.

This is, then, much more than a routine historical romance, and yet it is a disappointment. Miss White's book is profound in its theme, perceptive, learned, smoothly put together, but it is neither stirring nor memorable as a work of art.

Irish Stories

THE TRUSTING AND THE MAIMED and Other Irish Stories. By James Plunkett. Devin-Adair. $3.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

JAMES PLUNKETT is an unromantic, unraconteurish Irish storyteller; thus his talent is that of provocateur. It is also an unorthodox talent, for he is the first Irish writer to reflect what might be called existentialist realism. This is not to imply that the word "existentialist" covers the issue. But it is evident in Mr. Plunkett's studied, though never unfeeling, negativity.

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No overcast highbrow of European letters in recent memory has been accorded the kiss of death so hurriedly by the market-wary reviewers as has Mr. Plunkett; he *has* talent, but it thrives in a most uncongenial setting: misery-*cum*-solemnity, and, therefore, it has little popular appeal. Even should the author choose to say Life is Misery, that would be his sad option. What he is saying is that misery is life; and this would appear to be a most unrespectable premise for an Irishman. On that basis alone he is already at bay. How can we ever forgive him if he succeeds in making life's miseries live?

Mr. Plunkett often writes well, but it is in his more compact vignettes ("The Damned," "The Half-Crown," "Mercy," "Janey Mary"—all expertly conjured) that he does full credit to his gifts. These mood fragments record unnerving eruptions of soul that bind one down. The question of the author's vision turns less upon whether he paints ugliness than if he displays it larger than life.

In life misfortune may be inescapable, but it is not so patently enslaving as it is made out to be in these pages. Life allows for more byplay: the trusting are not always the maimed—nor the maimed always the trusting. Misfortune, even misery, give trial and can be benevolent. This absence of human variety in these stories seems to come from an immature, dry sensibility—and a lack of compassion. When Mr. Plunkett seeks to relate a character-story, the context becomes artificially existentialist. His talent is descriptive, not analytic. He builds an unyielding wall of lovelessness, poverty, or age about his victims, and his people are all faceless.

REVIEWERS

Frank Getlein writes frequently for The Commonweal, *Today*, and other publications.

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